(c) The investigation cases and the departmental inquiries are regularly monitored by the Chief Vigilance Officers (CVOs) of the subsidiary companies of CIL as well as in the CIL headquarters. Monthly reports are sent by the subsidiary companies of CIL to the CVO, CIL. The matters are reported every quarter to the Department of Coal as well as to the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC). In addition, the pending departmental inquiries are reviewed every month by the Chairmen-cum-Managing Directors of the respective subsidiary companies of CIL and the pendency position is also put up to the Boards of Directors regularly. Moreover, at the level of Chairman, CIL all pending departmental inquiries are reviewed every six months. The Department of Coal and the CVC also undertake periodic reviews of the pending investigations and inquiries.

In order to maintain independence and objectivity in vigilance investigation, all the CVOs of the CIL and its subsidiaries are taken on deputation from the Central Government services from outside the coal industry.

Acceptance of Sarkaria Commission Recommendations

*626. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Standing Committee of Inter State Council decided on 4th April, 2000, to accept several recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations;

(b) if so, which of the recommendations were accepted and which ones were rejected or left undecided;

(c) whether no consensus was arrived at with regard to the recommendation on operation of Article 356; and

(d) what steps have since been taken to bring about a consensus on the use of this Article?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) The Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council, in its meeting held on 4th April, 2000, considered certain recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission relating to "Administrative Relations', "Reservation of Bills', "Financial Relations', "Industries', "Agriculture', "Food and Civil Supplies' and "Trade, Commerce and Inter-Course within the Territory of India'. The recommendations of the Standing Committee in this regard will be considered by the Inter-State Council. The next meeting of the Inter-State Council is due to held on 20th May, 2000.

(c) and (d) The recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission relating to article 356 of the Constitution of India were not included in the agenda for the meeting of the Standing Committee held on 4th April, 2000 and were, as such, not discussed on that day. However, article 356 has been a subject matter of discussion in the earlier meetings of the Standing Committee and the Inter-State Council. In the sixth meeting of the Standing Committee held on 19th December, 1998 the subject was remitted to a Sub-Committee consisting of the Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh and Finance Minister of West Bengal under the Convenorship of the Union Defence Minister. The matter was also discussed in the fifth meeting of the Inter- State Council held on 22nd January, 1999 in which it was decided that the Sub-Committee under the Convenorship of the Union Defence Minister should continue deliberations to evolve a consensus. The Inter- State Council is yet to take a final view in the matter.

Private coal mines

*627. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the reason that the coal mines were required to be privatised when it was nationalised from the hands of private owners in 1969; and

(b) in how many countries the coal mines are allowed to be in the private ownership giving the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER AND MINISTER OF MINES AND MINERALS (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) The private coal mines of India were nationalised during 1971—73 and not in 1969. There is no proposal with the Government for privatisation of the existing coal mines of Coal India Limited (CIL) and Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL). The Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2000 has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha to make amendments to the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 to allow the Indian companies to be engaged in non-captive coal mining in the new blocks of coal and lignite and also to engage them in exploration of coal and lignite resources. The amendments are necessary for augmentation of coal production in the country in order to bridge the gap between the demand and supply of coal at the end of X and XI Plan periods.

(b) Except in Peoples Republic of China, Russia and Poland, the coal mines in other coal producing countries namely Australia, South Africa, United States of America, United Kingdom, Columbia and Indonesia are mostly under private ownership. Even in Peoples Republic of China, a decision has been taken to adopt foreign investment for formulation of joint venture companies